

Groupless Group in Colorado!

Saturday, September 14, at 5 p.m., five visitors, Harold & Stella, and the Colorado-based group leader met at a motel/restaurant in Colorado — a memorable meeting. Visiting were Belle (Howland) deVarga and her friend Helga Simpson from New Mexico; Todd Trout from Chagrin, Ohio; Tony Lutz from Sun Valley, Idaho; and Elizabeth Dodd from Santa Ana, California. Todd arrived after a 48-hour busride, stayed about 18 hours and returned by bus to Ohio! Everyone made considerable efforts to come to the special weekend (the rest came in their own vehicles).

After talking a while, the unusual and out-of-pattern gathering of the "Groupless Group" caravaned to the Colorado group's farm not far away.

On the spacious front lawn was a simply constructed temporary "pavillion" — wooden stakes had been driven into the ground, with a white gauze material stretched around to form a partially enclosed rectangle for the "stage" and audience area. Twelve dining chairs and several rugs for seating circled the area. The sun was about to set (instead of 9 p.m., everything was moved up).

Twelve group members wearing white costumes, with gold or red waist sashes and gold headbands, assembled in the center and stood quietly for a few moments.

The movements began (as described in the July/August issue of *The Workshop*).

The sunset lasted a long time (more than an hour — not one of those California sunsets where the sun plops into the ocean in a few minutes) — beautiful, with many variations of clouds bouncing the red and gold lights around. A few lightning strikes were viewed on the edges of the scene. Nature herself almost overwhelmed the proceedings.

After several movements, everyone was quietly asked to take whatever they were sitting upon and head for the house — folks making it inside moments before a downpour of rain. It was dramatic (good timing).

Following the movements, the visitors enjoyed a complete dinner provided by the group, most of whom were fasting for the weekend, although some members did break the fast to join in the dining and subsequent conversations.

There has been an indication that another invitation will be extended later this year — again, for those who wish — and as soon as a date can be set, you will be notified.

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Recommended Reading from James Harper

Capitola, California

The Unborn: The Life and Teaching of Zen Master Berkei, 1622-1693, translated with introduction by Norman Waddell, North Point Press; 155 pages, \$11.25.

The Sword of No-Sword: Life of the Master Warrior Tesshu, by John Stevens, Shambhala Publications, 171 pages, \$9.95.

James Harper sent us a review of these two books, written by Victoria Scott, who earned her Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies at Yale. She said what is learned from these two books is that both Bankei and Tesshu were passionate; both espoused "the method of no method"; both attained enlightenment of no method; both attained enlightenment and tried to convey it, "methodlessly," to others.

Scott said the method of no method does not involve the asceticism that both Bankei and the historical Buddha tried and then decried, but neither does it imply no effort at all. "The method without method is a balancing act between skill and abandon that is unique to each person, rather than a formula that can be applied with predictable results," Scott wrote.

The koans uttered by teachers of the past, she claims, were each a response to a particular occasion, so that to spend time trying to solve these old riddles is being "caught in another man's tub."

We expect James Harper may talk about the "method of no method" akin to some of his ideas on "The Fifth Way" at a forthcoming **Groupless Group** gathering.

Be sure to call James Harper or Chuck Edmunds to find out where the penguins are gathering this month!

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Teacher — JAMES VINCENT RANDAZZO

Now at nearly 46 years of age (October 19), James Vincent Randazzo compassionately and with genuine caring, leads and teaches his group of under 40 members in the strange, flat-top mountains of Colorado. The mercurial rascal of long ago has been tempered with maturity brought about by his various experiences over the years.

Stodgy he is not, as the twinkle still twinkles in his flashing dark eyes, and his ready smile bespeaks his continuing good humor.

There is no need for credentials. In observations of the group here, the proposition "By their fruits ye shall know them," continues to be sufficient. The group itself demonstrates the reflection of the influence they have received, many members having been with James for several years. It is an emotionally healthy, working group.

By previous arrangement some years ago, the group is destined to be trichotomous in about 15 months. The members have not been made dependent upon anyone, and are prepared to test their wings at the time of the teacher's retirement anon.

Come see for yourself.